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Record

THE BAPTIST

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

AUG 28 2008

NCE 1877

11, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 33



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

FamilyFEST promotes family missions

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The Jackson County area was the recipient of something unique in Mississippi Baptist life — a missions event designed to bring families together in service.

Mississippi FamilyFEST was held on the Gulf coast July 26-30. During those five days, over 125 people from across the state came in family groups to minister. The volunteers teamed with 45 local residents doing 53 mission action projects in 41 locations.

"We had two goals," said Tammy Anderson, consultant in the Mississippi Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (wMu). "First, we wanted to give families the opportunity to do missions together, and second, we wanted to give parents a way to spiritually nurture their kids and model their faith."

Another benefit was to provide churches in Jackson County with volunteers to serve alongside them. Churches were able to determine how best to utilize these guests from around the state.

"This was my first experience with a family ministry opportunity," said Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "I loved the idea, and I learned that senior adults and singles are family and want to be involved."

The event was sponsored in partnership with the Family Ministry Team of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Men's Ministry Department, Mississippi wMu, Jackson Association in Pascagoula, and local participating churches. Host churches included Arlington Heights Church, Pascagoula; Calvary Church, Pascagoula; Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa; and First Church, Moss Point.

Groups attending were given the opportunity to participate in light construction and painting; community service and outreach (surveys, prayerwalking, food and



BRAVING THE HEAT — The Castle family from First Church, Eupora, take a break from strenuous yard work during the FamilyFEST on the Gulf Coast July 26 – 30. The Castles consider this event a way to bond as a family and serve others. (Photo by Tony Martin)

clothing ministries, nursing home ministry, etc.); children's ministries (Backyard Bible Clubs, VBS, recreation and crafts, etc.); or acts of kindness ministries (yard cleaning and landscaping, cleaning abandoned lots, cleaning apartments, water distribution, etc.)

The event began Saturday, July 26, with registration, worship, and orientation at Escatawpa Church. On Sunday, participants attended local churches, prayerwalked at local schools, and participated in a block party at Arlington Heights Church. On Monday participants went to their ministry projects, had lunch at First Church, Moss Point, and continued with their ministry projects.

One special event on Monday evening was a "Trading Places." During this simulation exercise, participants took on the roles of financially disadvantaged individuals and families, and had to go through the ordeal of getting health care, food, money, and so forth.

Tuesday and Wednesday followed similar schedules, with lunch Tuesday at Calvary Church and Wednesday at Arlington Heights Church. Wednesday was capped by a worship celebration and cook-out at Beach Park in Pascagoula.

Tom Miller, associate in the Jackson Association, said, "I was very encouraged by participation from all over the state. The attitude of everyone was

good. They came to do whatever was needed."

The experience of the Castle family from First Church, Eupora, was typical. The family — parents Ronnie and Ginger, children John Aaron, Matthew, Katie, and Caleb — had never done a family project before.

"It was a great opportunity for us to come together as a family and serve others versus being served," Ronnie said. "We had all attended a Student Life for Kids camp this summer. We realized that Jesus came to save us. When we understand how much Jesus gave up to come, we thought we could give some."

The family had worked several projects while on the coast, including yard work, a soup kitchen, beach ministry, and an elementary school.

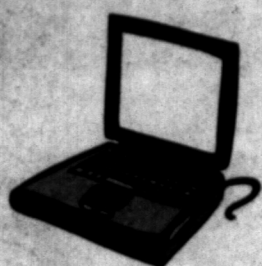
The heat and humidity were stifling, but they worked cheerfully. "We could do this in our own home town," John Aaron said.

"We want to alter the kids to a new way of thinking," said Ronnie. "Kids think they need more, but realistically they don't. We want our kids to bond, to be enriched, to think of others."

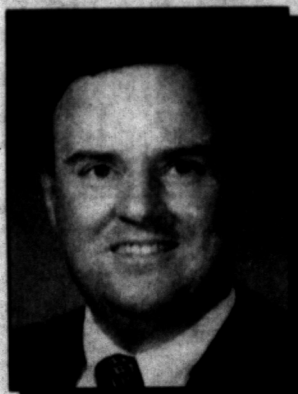
One grandmother who participated with her grandson wrote, "I wanted my grandson to be exposed to missions. I enjoyed my time of getting to know people from other churches. [A highlight was] seeing needs and how our teams could help, and seeing a change in my grandson."

"I felt like the event was very successful," said Anderson. "We had families participate who had never done anything like this before. A number of pastors brought families from their churches, and it was so positive for those who participated in it."





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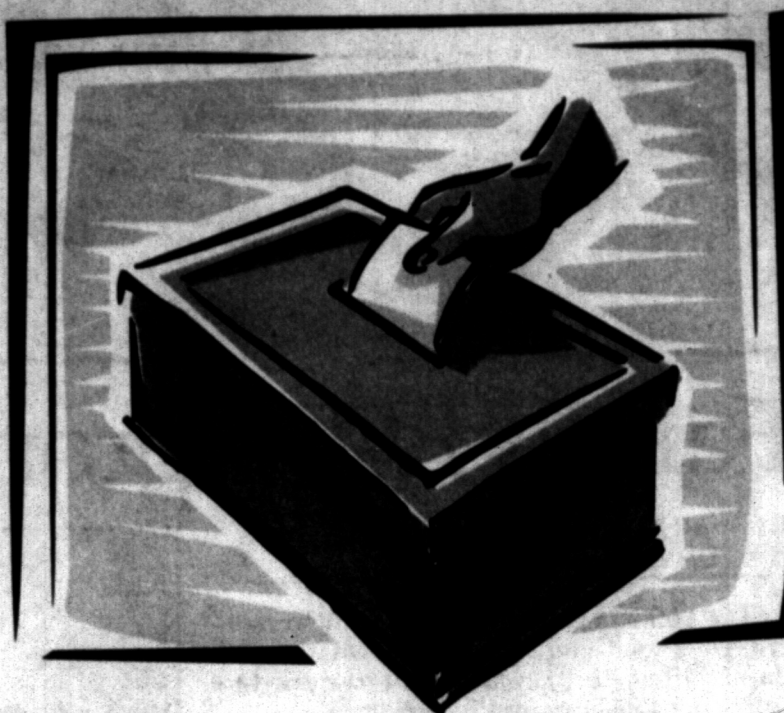
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VOLUME 132 • NUMBER 33
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi churches.
Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS.
Member, Association of State Baptist Papers.
Deadlines: News items — one calendar
week prior to requested publication date.
Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to
requested publication date. All submissions
are subject to editing.

The Third Effect



Modern American politics is in a mess, isn't it? The sensationalized rhetoric and histrionic mudslinging of today probably matches (or exceeds) the dirty politics of bygone eras. An astute follower of politics once observed, "You can't govern if you don't win," but the win-at-any-cost mentality of today has become a dangerous drain on our national vitality.

Pundits frequently speculate on the reasons why this mental cruelty is heaped upon us every two years or so. The main reason seems to be that it works. Twisting the truth and distorting reality have an impact on many voters, apparently in three ways.

The First Effect negative campaigning has is to embolden the hardcore supporters of the candidate making the attacks to support their candidate even more passionately, because their opponent looks like such a bad person. The Second Effect is to discourage

supporters of the other candidate, in hopes they will drop away from the campaign. The Third Effect is to create disgust among uncommitted voters in general in the hope that they will be repulsed by the mudslinging and just stay home on Election Day.

The Third Effect seems to be the most important and sought-after, because if uncommitted voters simply stay away from the polls, the attacking candidate has an opportunity to get his/her hardcore supporters to the polls and win the election. This is especially true in the election cycle we are currently undergoing.

Many of the crucial races in the country

are up for grabs. Many of the races that will decide which political party controls the reins of government for the next two years are within pollsters' margins of error. The Democrats want very much to hold on to power, and Republicans want very much to regain the power they once enjoyed.

Given the publicly-stated positions and intentions of the two parties, it's not an overstatement to describe the upcoming November 4 elections as utterly crucial to the future of our nation. Never have the differences between the two competing national parties been clearer. The lines separating the parties have never been brighter. The voters should be fired up like never before to march to the polls and cast a definitive vote.

That's where the Third Effect comes in to play. If only that huge middle of uncommitted voters can be driven away

from the polls by discouraging news and constant misinformation, the party faithful will have the chance to swing the election their way. The strategy is: if only the people with no political ax to grind can be kept from voting, an election can be won.

A voter can expect that type of behavior from unscrupulous candidates but the national news media, which have already proven themselves so untrustworthy in so many other ways, have pulled out all the stops in utilizing the Third Effect to sway this election. Just about every newspaper, every radio and television station, every cable news program, every politically-active Hollywood star has exploited the Third Effect in this election cycle.

They don't want us to vote — especially, they don't want

Christians to vote. They know the impact we have had on other recent elections, and they'd prefer we sit this one out. That seems to be the new tactic for dealing with Christian and "values" voters: beat them down with so much bad news and dirty insinuations that they'll just stay home on Election Day.

True enough, politicians have failed Christians in the past. They have courted us, used the proper code words, spoken to us of their deep faith, and then failed us. That will undoubtedly happen again.

We still must vote, even when the Third Effect is heaped upon us. If we care about the future of this country, we will make it to the polls on November 4 and we will vote. Not to do so is to give up on this great country, a gift from God Himself.

That should be all the reason we need to do what's right.

China breaking Olympics promises, shutting churches

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Chinese government has forced pastors of unregistered churches to pledge there will be no worship services at their congregations' meeting sites during a three-month period surrounding the Summer Olympics, a human rights group reported Aug. 13.

The pastors also were required to promise they would not organize or attend any religious gatherings that were not approved by the Communist regime, according to China Aid Association, an American-based organization that monitors religious persecution in the world's most populous country.

The report provided additional evidence of ongoing religious repression in China, reinforcing critics' claims that the regime has not lived up to its commitment to improve its human rights record when Beijing was named in 2001 as the host city for this year's Olympic Games.

Unregistered congregations, which are not approved by the government, are among the religious groups under pres-

sure from the Chinese regime.

China Aid Association reported on Beijing's latest strong-arm tactic and provided an English translation of the document pastors were coerced to sign. The form included a statement committing each signer to "refrain from organizing and joining illegal gatherings and refrain from receiving donations, sermons and preaching from" foreign religious entities.

It also said "activities at the gathering sites will be shut down for three months (July 15 - October 15)."

A China Aid staff member said the report revealed Beijing is "extremely two-faced."

"I think it displays the blatant hypocrisy of the Chinese government, who is telling the world on one hand that they're tolerating religious freedom while at the same time they are severely persecuting house church Christians," Daniel Burton told Baptist Press. "All the house church wants to do is worship in freedom without fear of being persecuted."

China Aid estimates from 60 million to 80 million

Christians are part of the unregistered church.

The report of China's newest coercive act against unregistered churches came only three days after President Bush called on the Chinese people to welcome religious faith. After attending an Aug. 10 service at a registered church in Beijing, Bush made a brief public statement in which he said, "[N]o state, man or woman should fear the influence of loving religion."

Later, he promoted religious freedom in a meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

White House officials said the Chinese regime denied Bush's request to attend worship with an unregistered church, according to The Washington Times.

The coercion of the pastors continued Beijing's year-long crackdown on Christians in unregistered churches, as well as other religious adherents. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has reported nearly 700 Protestant leaders have been arrested in the last year.

The Chinese government expelled more than 100 foreign missionaries between April and June 2007, China Aid reported last year. Citing sources within the government and at five mission agencies in its report, China Aid said the effort was part of a campaign to prevent foreign Christians from doing evangelistic work before the Olympics. Most of those expelled were citizens of the United States, South Korea, Australia, Canada, Singapore, and Israel, according to the report.

The expulsion was the largest of missionaries since the Communist regime sent away all foreign religious workers in 1954, China Aid reported.

The U.S. State Department has designated China as one of eight "countries of particular concern," a category reserved for the world's most severe violators of religious freedom. In addition to house church Christians, the Chinese government especially suppresses Roman Catholics in unregistered churches, as well as Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, and the Falun Gong, a meditation sect.

Baptists eyeing Georgia relief possibilities

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptists are organizing an overseas assessment team to evaluate relief needs in the Black Sea country of Georgia in the aftermath of fighting between Georgian and Russian troops and allied militias in the region.

While foreign embassies are evacuating their citizens, thousands of residents of Georgia's South Ossetia region have been forced from their homes by the fighting, according to news reports.

"I just got off the phone with partners updating me on the situation," said Abraham Shepherd, who directs work in the EuroMidEast and North Africa region for Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist international relief and development organization.

"Internally displaced people number over 100,000 and are pouring toward Tbilisi and the surrounding area," Shepherd said. "They are in bad condition."

Russian troops and regional paramilitaries were on the move in Gori, a strategic city in central Georgia and the birthplace of deceased Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, just hours after a truce was announced that should have sent those forces back to their earlier positions, according to the Associated Press.

The city was bombed and looted before those forces moved toward the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, and set up camp.

There have been other reports of Russian troops engaging in drunkenness, rape, looting, bombing of civilian targets such as apartment complexes, and destruction of food supplies. Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations during the Clinton Administration, toured the disputed area and reported that large wheat fields had apparently been set on fire.

In a recent New Hour interview on PBS, Holbrooke said, "The Russians wish to re-establish a historic area of hegemony that includes Ukraine, and it is no accident that the other former Soviet republics are watching this and (are) extraordinarily upset, as (Russian strongman Vladimir) Putin progresses with an attempt to re-create a kind of a hegemonic space."

South Ossetia declared its independence from Georgia in the early 1990s — a declaration that has not been recognized by the U.S. government or the United Nations. Abkhazia, which lies west of South Ossetia, also has been seeking independence as well.

Georgia gained its own independence when the Soviet Union collapsed but has been in conflict with Russia and separatist groups since then. Georgia is considered pro-Western and is an ally of the U.S. The country has attempted unsuccessfully in recent years to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The current conflict erupted when Georgia launched an offensive in early August to re-establish control over South Ossetia, and Moscow responded with a massive counter-strike, according to news reports. Some observers contend that Russia worked with South Ossetia separatists to provoke the conflict.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Aug. 14 that his country believed

South Ossetia and Abkhazia independence leaders would not agree to be "forced back into the Georgian state."

Victims of the fighting have been flooding into Georgia's larger cities with little more than the clothes on their backs. The United States has begun moving humanitarian assistance into Georgia, according to the Associated Press, and called on Russia to guarantee that relief workers and supplies would be able to move about freely.

"Please pray for wisdom in determining the timing to enter the conflict zone to provide relief," Shepherd said. "Pray for cool heads to prevail, for the sake of suffering people and for a permanent solution to the ongoing conflict."

"Ask God to comfort the loved ones of those who have died, to give healing to the injured and stamina for the people who have been displaced," he added, "and pray that believers in the area will be comforted by God's love."

For more information on the Georgia relief effort, visit gobgr.org.



Abortionist indicted

WASHINGTON (BP) — Massachusetts abortion doctor Rapin Osathanondh, charged with manslaughter in the death of a 22-year-old woman last year, has pleaded not guilty. Laura Smith's death last September became noteworthy not only because it occurred while she was in the presence of a doctor who had just performed an abortion on her but because she was a member of a pro-life, evangelical Christian family. Osathanondh, age 65, entered his plea July 24, eight days after being indicted by a Barnstable County Grand Jury, according to The Boston Globe. "Suffice it to say, there was an inattention to the kinds of procedures of a life-saving nature that one would expect in a place where an operation with anesthesia is being performed," said District Attorney Michael O'Keefe, The Globe reported. Osathanondh resigned his medical license in February after he apparently learned the state's Board of Registration in Medicine had voted to suspend him. The resignation is permanent. Eileen Smith, Laura's mother, did not know her engaged daughter was pregnant. Laura was pro-life and was reared in a Christian home with three other children by Eileen and her husband Tom. Laura had made a profession of faith in Christ and been baptized at the age of 12, her mother said. Since Laura's death, Eileen Smith has become outspoken in her support for the pro-life cause. "As I travel around the country speaking about Laura's story, I am encouraged that word is getting out and people are being helped and lives are being saved," she said. "My goal is to also be a catalyst in the laws changing in [Massachusetts] and maybe even beyond."

Looking back

10 years ago

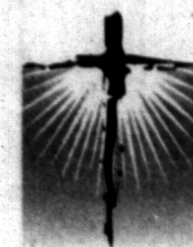
Mississippi native Jerry Clower, internationally-acclaimed humorist and devoted Southern Baptist layman, dies Aug. 24 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center from cardio-respiratory failure after undergoing heart bypass surgery five days earlier.

20 years ago

Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., is a "very troubled campus and divided institution," according to a report filed with the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada. The association's conclusion will eventually determine the seminary's accreditation status.

30 years ago

Bryant M. Cummings, minister of religious education at First Church, Jackson, resigns to become State Sunday School Secretary, according to an announcement by Chester L. Quarles, executive secretary-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

AUGUST 21, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 33



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
© 2005

Z VXQR JDC CD VXGG
CER IZOECDMN WMC
NZJJRIN CD IRLRJCXJVR.
GMFR KZSR: CEZICH-
CAD

Clue: Q = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Four Twenty-Four

PREACH JESUS!

I believe that God calls men to preach. Scripturally there is a variety of spiritual gifts that manifest themselves in ways that people generally refer to as preaching. They are very different and yet they have some of the same components. For instance, some people have been given the gift of teaching, others evangelism, others exhortation, and some prophecy or inspired speech. Regardless of what the gift is that a preacher has been given, the subject matter that is always front and center, top shelf, and the recurring theme should always be Jesus. While we are under a mandate to preach the whole counsel of God, in the final analysis and the ultimate triumphant word, Jesus is always the answer.

He is the answer for the sin problem of the human race. He is the answer for the search for significance and meaning in life. He is the answer for governmental dilemmas, social ills, and worldwide peace. While I have not made it my business or felt that it was my calling in life to go around and tell other preachers how to preach, I would remind them that whatever they are dealing with, whatever book they may be preaching through, or whatever theology they may be unfolding, they should have as their ultimate goal a presentation of Jesus Christ.

Across our state, about 2100 churches are a part of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Every Sunday someone is standing in those pulpits preaching. Every Sunday there are people who

are coming who need to hear that Jesus loves them and that He alone is the one who can deliver them from the snare and destruction of sin. They need to hear that Jesus gave His life just for them, and that He arose triumphantly to live forever more and to give them abundant life day by day.

The amazing thing is that while there are 66 books in the Bible written over a period of several thousand years by about 40 different authors, they all have one specific, pointed truth and that is God's provision for us is Jesus. So open your Bible where you will and preach the Word of God with passion and end up at the heart of Jesus every time. I was impressed to write this article because in about a 48-hour period I had three conversations, all of which had to do with preaching and the lack of the centrality of Jesus.

One of the conversations began something like this. "Do preachers not preach on Jesus anymore?" Not knowing the background of the question and knowing that it is my desire always to focus on Him as the transformer of life I asked, "What makes you ask that?" He gave me a couple of examples of which the most recent one was the most blatant. He told of a visiting preacher who came and,

because it was the political season, spent most of His sermon talking about politics. From there he expanded to analyze the political scene in Russia, and then He focused on the Bible's position on homosexuality. That was the sermon. Does God care about politics? Absolutely! Does He care about what is going on in Russia? Sure! Does He care about self-destructive lifestyles that are outside His will and can wreck and ruin the lives of others? Sure! — but supremely He cares about lives being touched by the One who said, "For the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). A Jesus

encounter is where every lesson, every sermon, and indeed every song should end up.

Over the 48-hour period, the other two conversations were equally as interesting. One was from a pastor who wanted to know how I would go about preaching on a subject that to my knowledge was not specifically dealt with in the Bible. He was having a problem trying to address it. I agreed with him that it was a problem. However, I would not want to arrive at church on Sunday and try to stand in the pulpit and preach on that idea. There is absolutely too much about which the Scripture is clear for us to spend time on issues about which the Scripture is silent. It will bring you back to preach on Jesus.

Of nothing else and no one else can it be said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" John 12:32. **Preach Jesus!**

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board


REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- Harmony Church, Louisville:** 125th anniversary, Sept. 7; meal following morning service, with singing, fellowship, and praise.
- Fellowship Church, Taylorsville:** Homecoming, Sept. 14, 10 a.m.; dinner on the ground, music, kids activities, and refreshments.
- New Hope Church, Foxworth:** Revival, Aug. 24 - 27; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Melvin Mordecai, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
- Fellowship Church, Ellisville:** Revival, Aug. 24 - 27; Sun., 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; George Berger, speaker; Tammy Sanford, music; Cecil Hathorn, pastor.
- Silver Springs Church, Osyka:** Revival, Aug. 22 - 24; Fri. - Sat., 6:30 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m., followed by lunch and 1 p.m.; Gene Douglas, speaker; Karen Smith, music; Riley Hinton, interim pastor.
- Pine Hill Church, Enterprise:** Homecoming and Revival, Aug. 24 - 27; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Malcolm Lewis, speaker; Vicki Heathcock, music; Danny Bullock, pastor.
- Bethel Church, Hazlehurst:** Homecoming, Aug. 24; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Van Windom, speaker.
- McCondy Church, Chickasaw Association:** is seeking previous pastors to invite to a homecoming/dedication service Oct. 12. Please contact Paul Childress, 261 CR 416, Woodland, MS 39776.
- Holly Grove Church, Simpson County:** Homecoming, Aug. 24; singing, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and cemetery meeting.
- Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth:** Homecoming, Aug. 24, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; special guests, The Perry's.
- Harrisburg Church, Tupelo:** 75th anniversary, Sept. 21; worship, 8:30 and 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Robert Hamblin and Larry Fields, speakers.
- Mt. Horeb Church, Meridian:** 160th Anniversary/Homecoming and Revival, Aug. 24 - 29; Sun., 11 a.m., Jerry Sanford, speaker; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Doug Moore, speaker; Tom Belcher, pastor.



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This ad is provided by the Education Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The Education Commission is the primary liaison between Mississippi Baptists and our three Baptist institutions of higher learning - Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College, and William Carey University. The commission acknowledges and is grateful for the support of MS Baptists for these three institutions. It is important to encourage potential students in our churches and youth programs to consider attending a Baptist college/university in Mississippi.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light, and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

August 21, 2008

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

BSU WEEKLY MEETING SCHEDULES

All Events are in the BSU CENTERS unless otherwise noted.

BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Noonday - Mon, Tues, Thurs, 1:00 p.m.
Prime Time - Worship - Mon, 7:00 p.m.

CO-LIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Praise/Worship - Mon, 6:15 p.m..
Dorm Bible Study - Tues, 9:00 p.m.
Chapel - Wed, 11:00 a.m.
Co-Ed Bible Study - Wed, 8:00 p.m.
Nursing Home Ministry - Thurs, 2:00 p.m.

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Prayer Breakfast - Tues, 7:15 a.m.
Bible Study/Lunch - Wed, noon
Focus - Worship - Thurs, 6:30 p.m.

EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Worship - Mon, 8:31 p.m.
Bible Study in Dorms - Tues evenings
Lunch & Devotion - Wed, noon

GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JEFF DAVIS CAMPUS
Prayer Group - Tues, noon
Lunch Program - Wed, noon
Bible Study - Thurs, noon

JACKSON COUNTY CAMPUS

Free Lunch/Worship - Tues, noon
Bible Study - Thurs, noon

PERKINSTON CAMPUS

Worship - Mon, 8:00 p.m.
Bible Study - Wed, TBA

HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE RAYMOND CAMPUS

Worship - Tues, 7:00 p.m.
Lunch - Thurs, 12:30 p.m.

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BLAST - Tues, 6:00 p.m.
Lunch Encounter - Thurs, 11:00 a.m.
Kid's Club, local - Thurs, 4:00 p.m.
Weekly Dorm Bible Studies - TBA

ITAWAMBA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Luncheon - Wed, E Period
Worship - Wed, 7:07 p.m.

JONES COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE

Worship - Tues, 6:30 p.m.

MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Food, Fellowship & Devotion - Wed, 11:30 a.m., Chapel
The Gathering (Worship) - First Tues of Month, 7:00 p.m., Chapel

PEARL RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Worship - Mon, 6:33 p.m.
Ministry Teams - Tues, 7:00 p.m.
Small Group Bible Study - Wed, TBA
Lunch Encounter - Thurs, 11:00 a.m.
"IGNITION" - Student Prayer Group, Thurs, 9:00 p.m.

SOUTHWEST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Shed - Bible Study - Mon, 7:00 p.m.
Noonday Luncheon - Wed, 11:30-12:30 p.m.



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Vision - Mon, 6:30 p.m., Provine Chapel

MISSISSIPPI DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Worship & Fellowship - Mon, 7:00 p.m.
Bible Study - Tues, 9:00 p.m., Dorms
Noonday Lunch & Devotion - Wed, noon

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Priority (Worship) - Tues, 6:15 p.m.
Noonday Lunch - Wed, noon

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

Lunch & Bible Study - Wed, 11:30 a.m.

NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bible Study Luncheon - Thurs, 10:40 a.m.
Team Kid - Thurs, 3:30 p.m.

NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Worship & Bible Study - Tues, 7:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

"Main Event" - Worship - Tues, 7:00 p.m.
Lunch Encounter - Wed, noon
Fresh Start/Freshmen - Thurs, 7:00 p.m.
Crossover/Transfers - Thurs, 7:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

"Coffeetalk" - Outreach to Internationals Mon, 8:00 p.m.
6:01 Praise, Worship & Bible Study - Tues, 6:01 p.m.
12:01 Lunch/Devotion - Thurs, 12:01 p.m.
Web site: www.usm.edu/bsu

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY

Campus Link - Mon, 8:30 p.m., Student Conference Center
Prayer Breakfast - Wed, 9:15 a.m.
Priority Lunch - Thurs, 11:45 a.m., Student Conference Center

For more info:
Contact the Collegiate Ministry Department
at 1-800-748-1651

MISSISSIPPI
BSU
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NEED A BREAK?

MINISTER OF LEADER LAB EDUCATION

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 14, 2008
GARAYWA, CLINTON

NO COST

PLEASE REGISTER
by September 30, 2008

The Minister of
Education Leader
Lab is designed
for you to:

- Get away from your normal schedule
- Network with other MEs
- Share what God is doing in your ministry
- Hear from one of the nations' premier leaders in Christian education:
Bruce Raley

For more info, contact
the Sunday School
Department:
601-292-3374,
1-800-748-1651 or
jclendinning@mbcb.org.

GROWTH SPIRAL CONFERENCE



NOVEMBER 10
NORTHCREST BC
MERIDIAN
9 A.M.-NOON

For more info, contact the
Sunday School Department:
601-292-3374,
1-800-748-1651 or
jclendinning@mbcb.org.



READY! FIRE! AIM???

Do you think sometime we get the order all wrong? That we shoot for targets in ministry without really knowing what we are aiming for? Maybe even firing out ministry projects just to hope that there is a target somewhere?

The Sunday School Growth Spiral is a tool to help your church aim for building an on-mission Sunday School organization, designed for evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. The Growth Spiral plan will help any church diagnose their own church health, and aim for future growth. And it will help you find the target!

In addition, this conference
will keep your church on target for:

- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Prospects
- Teaching Units
- Ministry Touches
- Space
- Workers
- Training
- S.S. Leadership Mtgs.
- Worship Attendance
- Offerings
- Baptisms

GET READY!!! YOUTH MINISTER'S RETREAT

November 10-12
Lake Guntersville
Louisiana

Speakers:
Allen Jackson, NOBTS
Randy Hall, Student Life
Birmingham, Ala.

Registration info coming

September is Baptist Foundation Month!

TASKS OF THE FOUNDATION

- Encourage Estate Stewardship
- * Assist in Estate Stewardship Planning
- Manage and Administer Gifts in Trust
- Fund Administration for Churches and Agencies



THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

MBF 1-601-292-3211, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 211, dhall@mbcb.org

Ministers' Wives Conference

"At the feet of Jesus" presented by Rita Sweatt

Rita Sweatt will present "At the Feet of Jesus," a two-session event.

The first session Rita presents a 35 minute monologue as the Biblical character, Mary of Bethany. She tells the story of Mary's journey of bravery in coming to Christ. She re-tells the Biblically based events found in the gospels: her listening at His feet, her struggle to understand the death of her brother, Lazarus, and the complete joy in his resurrection, and then finally, her need to lovingly express her gratitude as she anointed the feet of her Lord. The monologue concludes with Rita's daughters: Mary Megan, Molly, and Shelby singing and acting the closing song, Alabaster Box.

The last session, Rita speaks to the contemporary woman on Listening and Loving at the Feet of Jesus and how we can apply Mary's life story to our own we write each day. A beautiful, Egyptian perfume bottle is given at the conclusion of this event to each participant as a reminder to be a fragrant aroma as we spill our lives out as an offering each day.

Agenda

1:15 p.m.	Registration
	Chapel, FBC, Jackson
1:30	Welcome and introductions
	Alan Woodward
	Fellowship greeting
	Shirley Futral
2:00	"At the Feet of Jesus" - Mary of Bethany
3:00	Fellowship
3:30	"Listening and Loving at the Feet of Jesus"
4:45	Adjourn

For more info contact the
Pastor/Leadership
Development Department:
601-292-3305,
1-800-748-1651, ext 305, or
kmcDonnell@mbcb.org



2009

BAPTIST DOCTRINE STUDY PREVIEW BRUNCHES

Led by:
Argile Smith
FBC, Biloxi



All scheduled for **9 A.M. - NOON**

Monday, January 26

Main Street BC, Hattiesburg

Tuesday, January 27

Brandon BC, Brandon

Thursday, January 29

FBC, Oxford

Featured Book

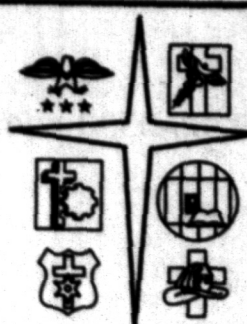
VIBRANT CHURCH

BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Thom S. Rainer & Daniel L. Akin

Preregistration requested. The \$10 registration fee includes the full brunch
and the featured study course book.

For more information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, 601-292-3284,
1-800-748-1651, ext. 284, or dbrashier@mbcb.org



Mississippi Baptist Chaplains' Association Fall Training

September 19, Skyroom, MBCB
8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., cost: \$10

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Nathan Barber

Chaplain to Heroes

Barry Click

Pastoral Evangelism: The Call to Bless and to Mourn

Duewayne Tullos

Who is a Hospice Chaplain?

For more info: Men's Ministry

601-292-3334, 1-800-748-1651, cwright@mbcb.org

R4 DAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE • CLINTON

REGISTRATION

3:00 P.M.

COST: \$6

BRING YOUR OWN

SACK SUPPER

AND DRINK

DEADLINE

FOR REGISTRATION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

PROGRAM

3:30 P.M.

QUESTIONS?

GAME

6 P.M.

DEANNA VAIL AT

(601) 292-3335 OR (800) 748-1651, EXT. 335



MISSISSIPPI PraiSing

September 11, 12, & 13 2008

**Mississippi PraiSing '08
New Hymnal Introduction**

Three convenient locations:

September 11 - North Oxford Baptist Church

Oxford - 7:00 p.m.

Choir rehearsal - 6:00 p.m.

September 12 - Main Street Baptist Church

Hattiesburg - 7:00 p.m.

Choir rehearsal - 6:00 p.m.

September 13 - Brandon Baptist Church

Brandon - 3:00 p.m.

Choir rehearsal - 2:00 p.m.



Special Guest

Mike Harland

Director

LifeWay Worship

(in charge of

Hymnal Project)

Registration fee:
\$5.00

Everyone present will
receive a new hymnal

Contact the Church Music
Department for registration
form, or you may register
at the door.

For more info contact the Church Music Department: 601-292-3267,
1-800-748-1651, ext. 267, or palford@mbcb.org



Pray this day for...

August 22-September 4, 2008

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"If My people who are called by My name,
will humble themselves and pray
and seek My face
and turn from their wicked ways,

then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Pray that missions lifestyles will be formed at the September and October Mother/Daughter Overnights, as these family members draw closer to one another and to our Lord.

Lift up the members of our military to the Lord for protection as they place themselves in harm's way. Also, pray that God will strengthen the relationship between our military and their families as they are apart from one another.

(1) Pray that the men in our churches would be Christian role models for the boys in the church not only during church functions, but in their every day lives. (2) Pray for husbands and fathers to be the men God has called them to be.

LABOR DAY
(1) Baptist Foundation Month (MBF Foundation); (2) Margaret Lackey State Missions Emphasis (Mission Strategy Emphasis)

(1) North Mississippi Leadership Training, Grenada (wMu); (2) MBCB Executive Committee Meeting (Exec. Admin.); (3) MBC Board Meeting (Exec. Admin.); (4) South Senior Adult Regional Rally, Hattiesburg (D&FM).

Be in prayer for voters in the upcoming presidential election, that God will grant them wisdom when casting their ballot.

Pray that (1) No child in Mississippi would be hungry, scared, lonely or hurt. (2) Every child in Mississippi will come to know Jesus Christ.

BAPTIST BUILDING AT HOME DAYS. Pray for Baptist Building staff as they meet to plan for future outreaches. Pray that each decision will be bathed in prayer before it is initiated.

North Senior Adult Regional Rally, Blue Mountain College. Pray that senior adults seek God's will for this special season of their lives when they have more time to invest in ministry whether from inside their home through prayer or outside in activity.

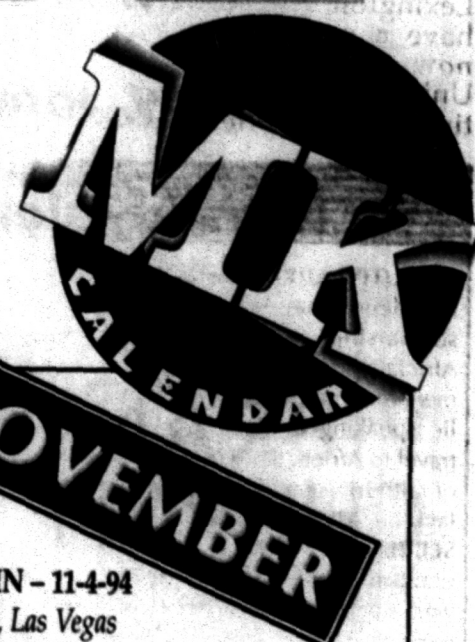
AMD/MBCB Prayer-Leadership Retreat, Garaywa. Pray that God would speak so deeply to the hearts and minds of all involved that others would notice something spiritually different about them as a result of this retreat.

(1) Missions Leadership Training, Garaywa, 22nd-23rd (wMu); (2) Please pray that all Mississippi Baptists will support the missions and ministry of their church by the faithful giving of their tithes and offerings.

Pray that this would be a mild hurricane season, in spite of the predictions. Pray that when activated, our Disaster Relief teams would show the love of Christ to those they serve.

Give thanks for God's guidance and provision through His people and Margaret Lackey State Missions. These fund the wMu missions endeavors of Garaywa, Christian Women's Job Corps and our Mississippi Literacy and Language Ministry, which continue to reach the lost for the glory of God.

Pray that God will work in the hearts and minds of those in the Jackson Metro area and throughout the state to bring an end to violence so prevalent, especially in our state's capital city.



State Women's Retreat

"Fueled by Faith"

Join us for an imaginary ISLAND ADVENTURE that's been designed especially for you!

October 17-18
Garaywa

Go to www.mbcab.org
Registration Deadline: October 8



Ms. Chocolate



Janie Walters



Becky Brown



Kathy Frady

SPECIAL GUESTS

For additional information,
please contact MS wMu at
800-748-1651, ext. 317;
601-292-3317;
or E-mail Lmiller@mbcb.org

MISS ALICIA MARTIN - 11-4-94

Parents: Tom & Cynthia, Las Vegas

MR. CAMPBELL PUTNAM - 11-5-98

Parents: Tracy & Genie, Central & Eastern Europe

MR. JACOB S. LIGHTSEY - 11-8-91

Parents: Tim & Rebecca, Mexico

MISS NICOLE JOHNSON - 11-9-04

Parents: Daron & Judy, Restricted

MISS MARISSA BLEDSOE - 11-15-96

Parents: David & Laurie, South America

MR. TAYLOR E. HODGINS - 11-19-98

Parents: Ray & Cynthia, Eastern South America

MR. CHUCK MULLINS - 11-26-98

Parents: Charles & Lynn, Western Europe

MISS LINDSEY PURL - 11-28-88

Parents: John & Amy, Central & Eastern Europe

MR. JOSIAH PUTNAM - 11-30-03

Parents: Tracy & Genie, Central & Eastern Europe

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name, MBCB wMu MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE:

Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.

HOUSE TOPS

Like movie mentor, Olympian senses 'God's pleasure'

BEIJING (BP) — Elaine Breeden's swimming career almost didn't get started. Her uncle signed her up for swim lessons when she was four, but Breeden was too afraid to get into the water.

"I refused to get in, and I remember him chasing me around the pool deck," Breeden said. "He finally won, and I have been swimming ever since."

Breeden, age 19 and a native of Lexington, Ky., is now happy that her uncle was faster than she was. She's representing the U.S. swim team in Beijing in the 100-meter and 200-meter butterfly events, her first time to compete in the Olympics.

In the 100-meter race, she advanced to the semifinals but didn't qualify for the finals.

A product of Trinity Christian Academy in Lexington, Ky., which doesn't have a swim team, Breeden now swims at Stanford University. In a university setting that can often be hostile

to Christians, Breeden has found a group of committed believers there as she pursues not only swimming, but her relationship with Christ.

"She's found a very comfortable, encouraging place at Stanford," Breeden's mother Lenore said. "She loves everything about it."

Breeden comes from a Christian home and became a believer at a young age. The faith that has been nurtured in her since childhood has a profound impact on her as a competitive swimmer.

"Being a Christian affects my athletics more than any other factor," Breeden said. "I know that my talent does not come from myself, and that I have a responsibility to put forth effort and perform to the best of my ability. Knowing that the outcome of my races is in God's hands gives me a sense of peace and keeps me humble in victory as in defeat."

"Like Eric Liddell [the Scottish runner whose story was told in the movie

Chariots of Fire], I feel God's pleasure when I swim, and I want to use my gift to reach out to others."

Life has revolved around swimming for the entire Breeden family for years. Her mother served as an official and Elaine's father Dan volunteered to help with computer and technological issues at meets and for the swim club.

Elaine's older sister also competed. "It was sort of a full family deal," Lenore said. "It's a very healthy environment. Plus," Lenore added in

typical motherly fashion, "they were perfectly fit."

For Elaine, "I think one of the greatest blessings in my life has been the constant love and support from my family and friends. God has provided me with countless supporters who are cheering me on from the other side of the world, and their calls and letters have made all the difference in my preparation for the Olympics."

For those close to her, such as her friends at tiny Trinity Christian Academy (with an enrollment of about 350 for

grades K-12), Elaine's success is a blessing to them as well. She has given them something special to cheer for, and has provided a way for them to be intimately connected to the Beijing Olympics.

"It is absolutely thrilling," TCA headmaster James Armistead said. "Our whole mindset is preparing students to make a difference for the Kingdom. It's great to see a young person who gives Christ the glory and embodies the highest level of commitment and dedication that you can imagine."

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS

1. **Ingomar Church, New Albany;** shown are the participants and associate pastor Gary Linville.
2. **Concord Church, Booneville:** July 7 - 11; enrollment, 82; ten professions of faith; offering went to the Cooperative Program.
3. **Wallerville Church, New Albany:** July 14 - 18; total enrollment, 130, with one profession of faith.



1. Ingomar Church



2. Concord Church



**VBS
2008**

MS POSITIONS

WANTED: PINEVIEW BAPTIST Church, Clinton, Miss., is seeking individual for part-time interim minister of music or part-time minister of music for blended Worship service. Please send resume to Pineview Baptist Church, 1288 Clinton-Raymond Road, Clinton, MS 39056 or email to Pineviewbc@bellsouth.net. Or fax your resume to 601-924-8378.

PELAHATCHIE BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a part-time Minister of Music for Worship Services, Adult, youth, and children's choirs. Please forward resume to the Pelahatchie Baptist Church, search committee, P. O. Box 876, Pelahatchie, MS 39145, attn: Due McKinion. Email: due@rankincounty.org.

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www.mbc.org

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CLASSIFIED ADS

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SEBREN'S SIDING, JACKSON, Christian owned. All home improvements, vinyl siding, windows, metal and shingle roofs, patio covers, screen and glass rooms. 601-992-2092, Don & Rita Sebre, owners.

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CONCRETE SLABS. WESTBROOK Construction, specializing in form and finishing concrete for residential and commercial jobs; licensed, bonded; church discounts offered. Call 601-842-9976 or 601-213-8026 for free estimate.

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CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

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CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, Alexandria, Louisiana, seeking senior high/college students minister to lead progressive student ministry. Must have passion for students & their families: ability to plan & coordinate 5011 Jackson Street, Alexandria, LA 71303 or brooks@calvarynet.net.

A FULL-TIME POSITION AVAILABLE for Associate Pastor of Worship and Youth at a traditional south Alabama congregation. Desiring Worship Leader (Music/Choirs) for more blended service and aggressive youth leadership. Education and experience desired. AM worship attendance: 220. Send resume to Little Escambia Baptist Church, P. O. Box 291, Flomaton, AL 36441 or Email littleescambia@earthlink.net.

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LaPorta living, spreading Gospel

BEIJING (BP) — In all likelihood, Matt LaPorta will have a standout career in professional baseball.

LaPorta, left fielder for the Akron Aeros, the Double-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, came to the franchise in the trade that sent Cy Young winner C.C. Sabathia to the Milwaukee Brewers in early July.

Teams don't typically give up pitchers like Sabathia for second-rate prospects. The Indians expect great things from LaPorta, who prior to the trade had hit 20 home runs for Huntsville to lead the Southern League in that category.

No matter what the future holds for LaPorta in the big leagues, he'll tell you that representing his country in the Olympics is "a huge deal."

"I'm so thankful. My fiancée and I, we've been doing a lot of praying about it. God definitely answered our prayers and has given me the opportunity to play on the Olympic team," LaPorta said.

"It's going to be up there with the pinnacle of my career," he continued. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

LaPorta, a native of Port Charlotte, Fl., was raised as a Catholic but eventually stopped going to church alto-

gether. During his high school years, a good friend was committed to changing that. The friend kept hounding LaPorta about going to church with him until LaPorta finally relented.

He began attending the non-denominational church with his friend and gave his life to Christ in November 1999. "Since then, my life has definitely changed," LaPorta said.

His baseball skills took him to the University of Florida, where he established himself as a bona fide star during his sophomore season, hitting .328 with 26 home runs and 79 RBIs.

LaPorta's junior year, however, was disappointing. His average dropped to .259 and his power declined as well. Still, the Boston Red Sox selected him in the 14th round of the amateur draft, and LaPorta had a decision to make: Go pro or stay for his senior season.

Many of his friends were encouraging him to leave school and take the money he was being offered, but LaPorta devoted the matter to prayer and he got his answer from the Lord.

"I felt like He led me back to school for my senior year," LaPorta said. "When everybody thought that was a crazy decision, I knew that the Lord was going to come through for me. I had no worries at all."

In his senior season, LaPorta rebounded in a big way. He hit .402 that season and the Brewers selected him in the first round of that year's draft, the seventh pick overall.

As LaPorta has honed his baseball skills, he also has grown



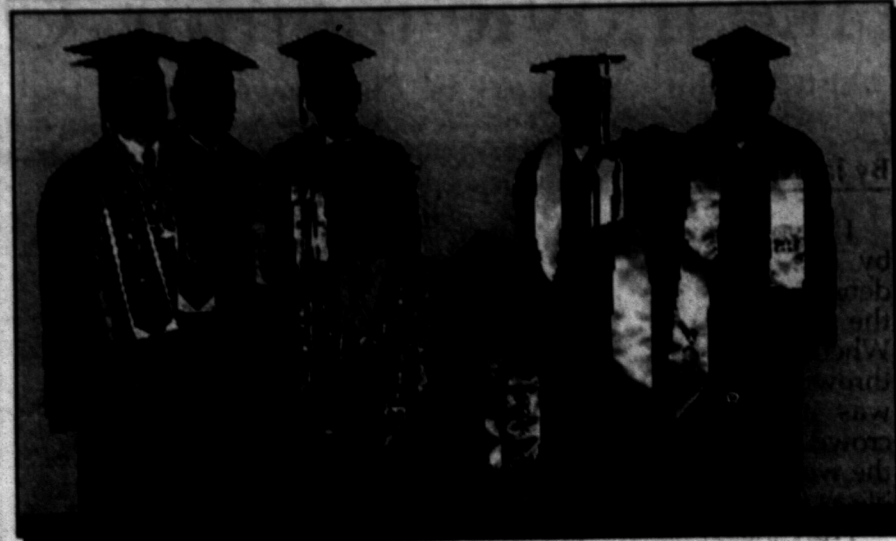
RISEING STAR — Matt LaPorta, now in Beijing with the U.S. Olympic baseball team, is shown earlier this year in the uniform of the Akron Aeros, the Double-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians. LaPorta believes Jesus "definitely changed" him. (BP photo courtesy of Ashley Leonard/Akron Aeros)

in his walk with the Lord. He's often recognized as an outspoken Christian who's not reluctant to talk about his beliefs. "I go out there every day, and I go out to have fun," LaPorta said. "Whether I do good or bad, that's not the point. That's not the point of life for me."

"The point of life for me is to spread the Gospel and bring more people to the Kingdom of Jesus."

"Sometimes it's tough," LaPorta said, "but you've got to realize there was a man who died for my sins and now is my God and my king."

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. First Church, Soso

1. **First Church, Soso**, honored their graduates May 18 with Bibles, a special service, a reception, and dinner for their families. Shown (seated) are Kraig Simpson, Reinier Capote, and Tracie Hill; standing, Chase Headrick, Matthew White, Hunter Jefcoat, Joseph Collins, and Jordan Walters.

2. **Damascus Church, Franklin County**, is hosting Cross Country for a night of inspiration and entertainment Aug. 31, 6 p.m.

3. **Brandon Davidson and Tyler Dearman**, who have been called into the ministry, shared their testimonies at **Mt. Horeb Church, Meridian**, Aug. 10.

4. **Plainway Church, Laurel**, held its 58th homecoming Apr. 6. The church recognized Jerry Pippen, Linda Jefcoat, Rachel Schoen, Emery Hill, Greg Jones, and Joe Parish for their years of service to the church by presenting plaques of recognition.

5. **Carrollton Church, Carrollton**, is hosting a woman's conference, **Seasons of a Woman's Heart** Sept. 13, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Page Hughes, speaker; Judy Bloodworth, music; light breakfast and lunch provided; \$15; for information call (662) 237-6326 or 299-3358.

6. **Spring Valley Church, Mathison**, is hosting **Second Chance in Concert** Aug. 31, 1:30 p.m. Charles White, pastor.

7. **Bethel Church, Oxberry**, is having a 5th Sunday service Aug. 31, 5 p.m., including local talent, youth choir, and a potluck supper.

8. **First Church, Gautier**, is honoring Billy R. Williams and his wife for 50 years in ministry Sept. 6, 3 - 5 p.m., at the church.



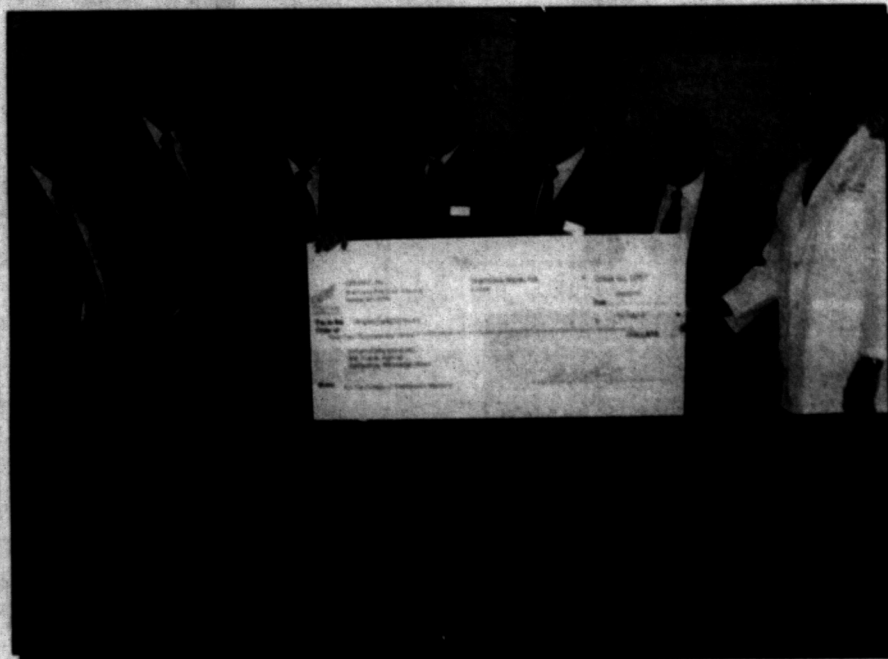
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P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205

STAFF CHANGES

1. **Dewey Wesley Smith** has resigned as pastor of **First Church, Bellevue**, and has been called as pastor to **Lincoln Road Church, Hattiesburg**.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. The Gulf States Osteopathic Medical Foundation (GSOMF) presented a check to the **William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine (WCU-COM)** in the amount of \$32,000 preceding the Board of Trustees meeting held recently on the Hattiesburg campus. (left to right) **Jeffrey LeBoeuf**, the executive director of the Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association; **Odean Busby**, chair of the WCU Board of Trustees; **Tommy King**, president of WCU; **Michael Murphy**, dean of the WCU-COM; **Darrell Lovins**, associate dean of clinical sciences; and doctors of osteopathic medicine **Stephen Johnson** and **Bill Entekin** pose with the presentation check during the press conference.



1. WCC-COM presentation

2. The **Blue Mountain College Lady Toppers** finished fourth in the nation among NAIA schools in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association academic honor roll. The Lady Toppers compiled a 3.608 GPA last year and finished behind only **Concordia University-Nebraska** (3.667), **Westminster College** (3.653) and **Oklahoma Christian University** (3.623) in the WBCA rankings.

Horton to speak at Ag Fellowship

Francis Horton, who directs Southern Baptist relief and development work in Central and South Asia through Singapore-based Baptist Global Response, will speak at the Mississippi Baptist Agricultural Fellowship on August 23 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

A Mississippi native and 1987 graduate of the Mississippi College School of Law in Jackson, Horton served as a staff attorney for the United States Department of Justice and Small Business Administration until 1995, when he became the South Asia regional director for International Business Services, Inc., an international non-profit organization. In 1997, he founded **Anjene Pakistan (Pvt) Limited**, which operated a fish farm and training center and exported handicrafts from Pakistan.

In 2005, he added the responsibility of coordinating the South Asia activities of the **Asian Disaster Foundation** in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He and his wife **Angie** currently reside in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

For more information on the meeting, contact **Carol Wright** at (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.



Horton

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

A Confident Life

Hebrews 10:19-29, 32-36

By Janice H. Fortenberry

I have always been intrigued by this business of self-confidence, especially as it relates to the question of "popularity." When I was a child and was thrown into a group setting, I was not among the popular crowd. So I tried to blend in with the woodwork and be as invisible as possible.

Now that I'm older, I have to occasionally mix and mingle with people but it takes a huge expenditure of energy for me to do it. Believe me, it doesn't come naturally for me and it's an effort to be social.

What I have figured out is that those who come across as "popular" are those who exude self-confidence. Of course, that begs another question: Where does that self-confidence come from in the first place? I don't

think I could have come from a more loving, supportive family, so why wasn't I endowed with self-confidence from the beginning? I honestly don't know.

I do know that once I discovered something in life that brought fulfillment and self-esteem (being a college instructor), the self-confidence blossomed. I walk into a classroom, I know my material and I know without a doubt that I can convey enthusiasm about the human body to the students and, for those who work with me, I can help them master the material, too.

I'm confident in teaching because I've seen that I can do it. The question this week's lesson presents is: Am I confident as a believer? Have I seen the power of God working in my life to the



Fortenberry

point that I am convinced He is real? Have I put my faith to work to the point that I am confident to say to anyone, "God is present within me and I can trust him to guide me, comfort me and empower me regardless of the circumstances engulfing me?"

First of all, I can gain confidence by knowing the source of spiritual confidence (Heb. 10:19-23). Prior to Christ's coming to earth, the inner sanctum of the temple was the Holy of Holies and was separated from the outer areas of the temple by a curtain. Only the high priests were allowed to enter this holy place because this was where God resided. Ordinary believers had to rely on the high priests to intercede on their behalfs, to offer sacrifices for their sins and to commune with God for them. When Christ died on the cross, he entered the heavenly temple and opened the curtain to the Holy of Holies so that we could follow him

there (v. 20) as long as we confess and repent of our sins.

Secondly, spiritual confidence is a product of staying in church (Heb. 10:24-25). Christian faith is not meant to be practiced in isolation. Personally, I don't know what I'd do without the encouragement of my fellow believers to help me avoid the traps of defeat and discouragement.

Third, the writer of Hebrews emphasized that spiritual confidence is retained only if we take sin seriously (Heb. 10:26-29). If I walked into the classroom and deliberately used practices that are not acceptable, I'd become ineffective in a heartbeat. Likewise, when we take sin lightly, we lose earthly blessings and heavenly rewards because of our unconfessed sin. Our salvation is intact, but the joy of it is obscured by our disobedience and disregard for God's holy authority.

Another way we can remain confident in our Christian walk is to remember past victories (Heb. 10:32-36). While the Hebrew Christians experienced social isolation and persecution, when I think

of past victories I recall those times when God touched my life. When we lost our first child at birth, He was there. When the reality of our son's mental retardation hit us like a ton of bricks, He was there. When we found a suspicious mass in our son's abdomen on an MRI, He was there. When we prayed on the sidelines while our daughter picked a profession and then a life's mate, He was there.

When I walk into those classrooms next week at a new college, I'll have the confidence I need to invoke the students' confidence in me as their instructor. More importantly, when I fall on my knees in coming days to ask God's help in meeting the challenges of life, I know He'll be there—first, because I know I belong to Him and, secondly, because He's always been there when I've needed Him before. And this, my friends, is a confidence builder like no other.

Fortenberry is a member of First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Caesarea: Facing Secular People

Lesson Passages: Acts 24:22-26; 26:22-31

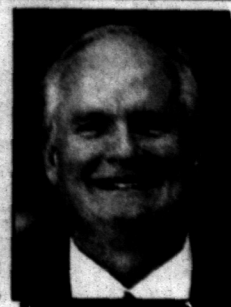
By W. Wayne VanHorn

Last week we saw how Paul was taken into protective custody in Jerusalem. He was then secretly conveyed to Caesarea, 70 miles to the northeast of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean coast. Felix then Festus, Roman procurators, had their official residence there. Caesarea was home to Cornelius, a Gentile who accepted Christ while Peter was preaching (Acts 10:44); Philip also lived there (Acts 21:8).

While imprisoned in Caesarea, Paul had the opportunity to share the Gospel with many people. Each responded in a different way, but no response deterred Paul from continuing to talk about Jesus. The emphasis of this week's lesson is on continuing to offer the gospel to secular people, those who seemingly have no interest in the gospel, salvation, or even religion.

1. Some Will Wait: Keep Talking (Acts 24:22-26)

Felix was the Roman procurator over Judea from A.D. 52-60. Paul presented his defense for the doctrine of the resurrection for Christ in an effort to explain why the Jews were falsely charging him. Paul would have received the governor into the Christian fellowship had he been willing, but Felix decided to wait and to hear more of the matter at another time. Paul did not get discouraged and quit. Instead, Felix kept him under house arrest but allowed Paul to have visitors. Though his freedom of movement was restricted, Paul kept talking about the wonderful Savior who changed his life on the road outside Damascus. A short time later, Felix's successor, Festus, procurator from A.D. 60-62, heard Paul's presentation as well.



VanHorn

2. Some Will Ridicule: Show Respect (Acts 26:22-25)

Festus allowed Paul to present his case again when the Jewish king, Agrippa II, great grandson of Herod the Great, visited Caesarea with his wife Bernice. When Paul finished his presentation, Festus accused him of being mad (Acts 26:24). We get our word "maniac" from the Greek word rendered mad. Festus thought Paul was out of his mind and said so "in a loud voice" (NASB). Paul responded in a measured way, showing due respect to the procurator by addressing him as "most excellent Festus" (Acts 26:25; NASB). He also diverted the focus of the presentation to King Agrippa II, which had the effect of relieving some of the tension of the situation.

3. Some Will Be Silent: Ask Questions (Acts 26:26-27)

As Paul shifted his focus to Agrippa, he started by indicating that his ministry was not "done in a corner," a figure of speech meaning done secretly. The life and ministry of Jesus, including his death and resur-

rection, were open knowledge as was Paul's career of preaching and teaching about Jesus. Agrippa II was certainly aware of some aspects of both Jesus' and Paul's careers even before Paul spoke.

When the king made no reply, Paul asked him a rhetorical question to get a response and continue witnessing to Agrippa. "King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do" (Acts 26:26; NASB). Paul often presented the message of Jesus as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic promises. As a Jew, Agrippa would have been very familiar with those passages. Paul's diplomatic courtesy of saying he knew the king believed the prophets, put the king in the best possible light.

4. Some Will Refuse: Express Concern (Acts 26:28-31)

Agrippa finally responded to Paul by refusing to accept Christ. His response is rendered as a statement in the King James Version and as a question in the New International Version. Either way, the result is the same; the king was not inclined to side

with Paul on the issue of Jesus. We should note that converting the king was not the reason for the meeting. Instead, Paul was asked to explain to the king why the Jewish leaders sought his life. Neither the Roman procurator nor the Jewish king converted to Christianity; both left the meeting knowing that Paul had done nothing deserving of the death penalty or even imprisonment. Before they left they heard Paul express his wish that they and all others who heard the Gospel would be just like him, devoted to Jesus.

I once became discouraged because no one seemed responsive to hearing the Gospel. During a time of prayer, the Lord led a dear friend into my life to remind me that my job was to be a witness. The response people gave was not my responsibility. This lesson encourages adults to refuse to give up on the salvation of any person, no matter how they respond initially.

VanHorn is dean of the School of Christian Studies & the Arts at Mississippi College and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

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Record

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Yates



2. Twin Lakes Church



3. North Long Beach Church



4. Ingalls Avenue Church



5. Bilbo and Gill



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. Hillsboro Church, Hillsboro, presented minister of music Elliot Yates with a gift to assist him during his summer internship at the College Light Opera Company, Falmouth, Mass. Shown is Yates, left..

2. Twin Lakes Church, Madison, in partnership with Warming Hands Ministry, New Orleans, collected pot holders as a mission project. Shown are Frances Flemming, Wilma Freshwater, and Mary Ann Sones.

3. Members of North Long Beach Church, Long Beach, walked in the Long Beach 103rd Birthday parade and Military Appreciation Day. Shown are the participants.

4. Ingalls Avenue Church, Pascagoula, sponsored a summer reading program, Ice Cream for Books in June and July. Participants read 1,753 books. Shown are the participants.

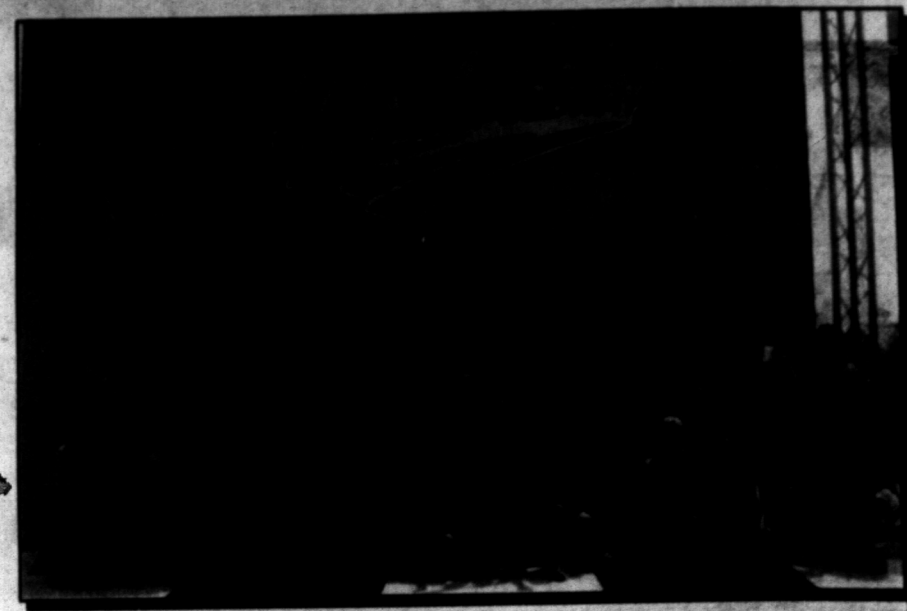
5. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, recognized deacon Ivy Gill as the oldest father present on Father's Day, born in 1930. Shown are pastor Trent Bilbo and Gill.

6. Kids and chaperones from Meadowview Church, Starkville, attended kids camp at Shocco Springs in July. Shown are the participants.

7. Members of Oakdale Church, Brandon, and Park Place Church, Pearl, participated in a mission trip to Romania June 13 with the Gary Bowlin Evangelistic Association. Participants included Nola Giffing, Cathy McGehee, Ray Downey, Kaye Myers, Cindy and David Williams and Kay and David Stodgill.

8. New Prospect Church, held a baby dedication July 6. Shown are Michael, Tracy, and Allison Etheridge and pastor Willie Welch; and Lance, Becky, Allen Michael, Brook Lewis and Welch.

9. Corinth Church, Magee, held GA recognition services Aug. 10. Shown are the participants.



6. Meadowview Church



8a. New Prospect Church



8b. New Prospect Church



9. Corinth Church